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SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS ROUNDTABLE 2007 UNGA - INPUT FROM
CROATIA

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¶1. USG programs in Croatia for the past several years have supported activities to bolster Human Rights in the areas of refugee return and reintegration, minority rights, and continued assistance to civil society organizations. We have, together with our European partners, the OSCE and UNHCR, worked with the GoC to establish measurable benchmarks regarding refugee housing and infrastructure issues. Other priorities have been improving implementation of the Constitutional Law on National Minorities and monitoring sporadic incidents of ethnically motivated violence across the country.

¶2. Another key area of activity has been to create a stronger framework for NGO activity in Croatia. Through programs being implemented by USAID, the USG has spent approximately 12 million over the past six years assisting in the development of a strong and self-sustaining civil society. Post has assisted Croatian partners to strengthen NGOs' capacity to implement new legislation. Working in coordination with the GOC, USAID has assisted in drafting laws and other related regulations directly affecting NGOs' ability to freely operate and function in an emerging democracy. Over the past year, the Embassy's Democracy Commission has also issued two grants totaling \$36,000 for human rights programs including: a documentary film chronicling the reintegration process of ethnic Serb refugees returning to Croatia, and a project fostering cooperation in ethnically mixed schools in eastern Slavonia.

¶3. The GoC's domestic human rights priorities correspond to these areas of Post's focus: strengthening the framework for civil society and resolving post-war issues related to national minorities, especially the Serb minority. Internationally, the GoC over the past few years has played a measured and constructive role in advocating for the protection of the rights of the Croatian minorities in neighboring Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia. Croatia has also actively supported international efforts to bring a peaceful resolution to the issue of Kosovo, including a strong emphasis on the need to provide adequate guarantees and protections to the Serbian and other minorities there.

BRADTKE